

Preliminary Amendment dated October 16, 2007
In Response to Office Action of July 12, 2007

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The drawings in the attached replacement sheet correct informalities noted in the Office Action. FIGs. 7(B) and 7(C) are revised to illustrate that the folded portions of the wrapping container at the front face are folded forward after being opened by means of lifting tape 14 as illustrated in FIGs. 1(D) and 3(B). No new matter has been added.

Attachment: Replacement sheets

REMARKS

A final Office Action was mailed on July 12, 2007. Applicants timely file this Preliminary Amendment together with a Request for Continued Examination.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims

Claims 1 and 4 - 32 are pending.

Claims 2 and 3 were previously canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 4-18, 21-27, 29 and 31 were previously withdrawn from consideration. Claims 4 and 5, which presently depend from canceled claims 3 and 2, respectively, are amended to depend from claim 1.

Claims 1, 19, 20, 28, 30 and 32 stand rejected.

Claims 28 and 30 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1 and 32 are amended. No new matter is introduced. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, with reference to page 31, line 15 through page 32, line 7 of Applicants' substitute specification, and with reference to Applicants' FIGs. 6(A) - 6(D), 7(A) - 7(C).

Claims 1, 4 - 27, 29, 31 and 32 are currently pending.

Objection to Drawings

The drawings are objected to. Specifically, the Examiner finds that the pattern for the adhesive 16 as depicted in FIG. 28 (described by the Examiner as "two lines of adhesive 16 at two locations") fails to find a basis for support in the specification as originally filed. Applicants respectfully disagree. At page 38, lines 17 - 19 of the original specification filed November 10, 2005, the adhesive is described as follows:

The adhesive can be selected from hot-melt type adhesives without restriction, and is applied in a known application pattern in a form of plane, stripes, spiral, Ω , etc.

Applicants submit that the pattern referenced by the Examiner falls within the category of "stripes," and is therefore supported by the specification.

The Examiner further finds that the adhesive 16 has not been fully denoted at the last two lines of page 40. Applicants amend the specification accordingly to fully denote the adhesive as "adhesive 16."

Applicants therefore respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Objection to Specification

The specification is objected to in regard to informalities. For example, the Examiner suggests that the last sentence of the abstract is inexact or verbose. Applicants amend the abstract accordingly.

The Examiner objects to the Summary of the Invention as failing to be commensurate in scope with the claimed invention. As suggested by the Examiner, Applicants further amend the Summary of the Invention to remove additional text not pertaining in particular to the scope of the invention as claimed.

The Examiner questions, based on the substitute specification, where broken line 15 is provided only on the rear face of the wrapping container, and if so, questions how the front face is divided as shown in FIG. 7. As noted in a prior Response, broken line 15 is in fact provided only on the rear face of the wrapping container, as the front face is opened as shown in FIGs. 1(D) and 3(B) by lifting tape 14. Applicants submit a revised drawing sheet for FIGs. 7(B), 7(C) illustrating that the folded portions of the wrapping container at the front face are folded forward after being opened by means of lifting tape 14 as illustrated in FIGs. 1(D) and 3(B). FIG. 7(C) continues to show that the interlabial pad 2 is removed on a finger of the right hand from between the folded portions, and

that the portions 15 of the wrapping container on the left hand are separated to assist in placement of the interlabial pad 2.

The Examiner also objects to text previously moved in a previous Response from the Summary of the Invention to the Detailed Description, suggesting that it is unclear how the embodiments described in this text related to the portions of the Description that follow, and that all text relating to a particular drawing figure be relocated to a single section of the Description. Applicants respectfully disagree with this objection. Applicants submit that, where a specific relationship exists, a drawing figure is identified in the moved text which can be correlated with additional text directed to the drawing figure. Applicants are unaware of any requirement mandating that all text in the Description relating to a drawing figure must be located in a single section of the Description.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objections to the specification be withdrawn.

Claim Objections

Claims 1, 19, 20, 28, 30 and 32 are objected to as to informalities. Specifically, the Examiner objects to certain informalities relating to independent claim 1, and to duplication of claimed matter between claim 1 and claim 28. Applicants amend independent claim 1 to address the identified informalities, and cancel claim 28 without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, Applicants therefore respectfully request that the objections to the claims be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §112

Claim 30 is rejected under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Specifically, the Examiner finds that the terms of measurement used in claim 30 are unclear, that the manner of testing used to provide the measurements is not

disclosed. In the interests of prosecution efficiency, Applicants cancel claim 30 without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby making this rejection moot.

Claims 1, 19, 20, 28, 30 and 32 are rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner finds that claim 1 is unclear as to the number of finger portions and mini sheet pieces claimed, and suggests that the mini sheet pieces should be identified as being attached to separable rather than separate sections. The Examiner also suggests that more detail is required as to the structures for finger insertion and their direction. Applicants amend claims 1 and 32 in view of this rejection, and submit that independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 19, 20 and 32, in view of the amendments to independent claim 1 and dependent claim 32, are definite and clear. As claims 28 and 30 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicants submit that the rejection as to claims 28 and 30 are moot.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under the first and second paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. § 112 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102

Claims 1, 19, 20, 28, 30 and 32 have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,687,911 to Fitz. Applicants amend independent claim 1 to further clarify the nature of their invention, and respectfully traverse the rejections under 35 USC §102(b).

In amended independent claim 1, Applicants claim:

1. A wrapping container for individually wrapping an interlabial pad, comprising:

an interlabial pad having an elongated shape, comprising a surface sheet, a back sheet, an absorbent body in-between the surface sheet and the back sheet, and a belt-like sheet affixed to each side of the back sheet along a transverse direction of the back sheet;

a wrapping sheet;

a broken line defining perforations disposed on the wrapping sheet for completely separating or dividing separable sections of the wrapping container into two; and

a finger insertion portion formed by two mini sheet pieces that are each attached to one of the two separable sections of the wrapping container, wherein:

each of the two mini sheet pieces is attached to one of the two separable sections along first opposing edges of the mini sheet, said first opposing edges being opposed along a first direction that is transverse to the broken line,

each of the two mini sheet pieces is unattached along second opposing edges of the mini sheet, said second opposing edges being opposed along a second direction that is parallel to the broken line and each second opposing edge providing an opening in combination with the one separable section for inserting and passing a finger therethrough,

the surface sheet of the interlabial pad is in contact with the broken line of the wrapping sheet before the wrapping container is opened, and

the back sheet of the interlabial pad with the affixed belt-like sheet is on a side of the interlabial pad opposite to a side of the interlabial pad on which the surface sheet faces a portion of the wrapping sheet on which the two mini sheet pieces are attached.

(Emphasis added).

Fitz discloses a tampon handling aid including two finger coverings joined by a line of weakness that enables the two finger coverings to be at least partially detached from one another so that one of the detachable portions may be used as a tampon disposal aid (see, e.g., abstract and Col. 2: 47 - 50 of Fitz). In sharp contrast to Applicants' wrapping container as claimed in amended independent claim 1, Fitz's handling aid does not include an interlabial pad.

Fitz's handling aid may be formed from two planar portions joined to each other at a joining line, which the Examiner compares to Applicants' claimed broken line (see, e.g., Col 5: 62 - Col. 6: 7 of Fitz). Because Fitz does not disclose an interlabial pad, unlike Applicants'

claimed wrapping container of amended independent claim 1, Fitz also fails to disclose or suggest an interlabial pad having a surface sheet in contact with the joining line.

In addition, Fitz fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' claimed two mini sheet pieces that are each attached to one of two separable sections of the wrapping container along first opposing edges of each mini sheet that are opposed in a first direction that is transverse to the broken line, and that are unattached along second opposing edges of the mini sheet that are opposed in a second direction that is parallel to the broken line, such that each second opposing edge provides an opening in the mini sheet in combination with the one separable section for inserting and passing a finger completely therethrough. Rather, in Fitz's handling aid, an inserted finger is contained within a pocketed area of each detachable portion 10, 20, and therefore cannot be said to extend through the opening (see, e.g., FIGs. 2a - 2c of Fitz).

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Applicants amended independent claim 1 is not anticipated by Fitz, and stands in condition for allowance. As claims 19, 20 and 32 each depend from allowable claim 1, Applicants further submit that dependent claims 19, 20 and 32 are also allowable for at least this reason. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1, 19, 20 and 32 under 35 USC §102(b) be withdrawn.

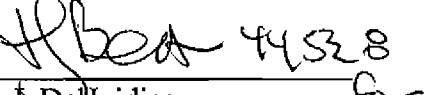
CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

If there are any issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Dated: October 16, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments